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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [IS KMDR MEDIA REACTION REPORT](#)
SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

- [1](#)1. Mideast
- [1](#)2. Newsweek Reports of Koran Desecration at Guantanamo

Key stories in the media:

All media (banner in Jerusalem Post) reported that in his speech to the AIPAC convention in Washington Tuesday, PM Sharon urged PA Chairman [President] Mahmoud Abbas to coordinate the disengagement with Israel, which would "enable us to embark on a new era of trust and build our relationship with the PA." Sharon added: "In this pre-road map phase -- and we are still in the pre-road map phase -- we see great opportunities with Chairman Abbas." Sharon promised to release the next tranche of Palestinian prisoners. Israel Radio cited the PA's response that this gesture was meant to satisfy the U.S. government, and that Sharon had already committed himself to it at the Sharm el-Sheikh conference. Sharon also said that the PA still had commitments to meet under the road map. The media reported that Senator Hillary Clinton (D-NY), who spoke at the convention, praised Sharon's disengagement move. Israel Radio reported that Sharon returned to Israel this morning.

Ha'aretz reported that during his meeting Thursday with President Bush, Abbas will focus his efforts to ensuring that Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip is not accompanied by the expansion of settlements. Israel Radio and Ha'aretz web site reported that Abbas told reporters upon arriving in Washington this morning: "We want from the United States a clear political position regarding the implementation of the road map as well as economic aid. We hope we can get it."

Israel Radio cited the London-based newspaper Al-Quds Al-Arabi as saying that Abbas has secured the agreement of Hamas leaders to postpone the elections for the Palestinian parliament. The radio later cited a denial by Hassan Yousef, Hamas's leader in the West Bank.

Al media reported that on Tuesday, police and the Shin Bet arrested three Sderot residents suspected of collecting information about security arrangements at Sharon's Negev ranch. They were later released.

Ha'aretz reported that five reservists who were recently called up for military service in the territories have told their commanders they will not show up, as a means of protesting against the disengagement plan. All five are religious, and some live in settlements. Yediot reported that the IDF's Southern Command has authorized soldiers to use live fire against Palestinian demonstrators trying to enter settlements during the disengagement operation. The newspaper also reported that foreign workers employed in the Katif Bloc will be deported from Israel if they refuse to be evacuated.

Jerusalem Post reported that construction work continued unabated along the Philadelphia Route on Tuesday, despite Sharon's recent statements declaring that Israel will hand over the area to Egypt if Palestinian weapons smuggling is stopped. Jerusalem Post and Ha'aretz also reported that A-G Menachem Mazuz has instructed Sharon and other ministers to inform him of the details of an agreement being formulated with Egypt to station new Egyptian forces on the border so that he can determine whether the deal would have to be

ratified by the Knesset.

Jerusalem Post and Israel Radio reported that on Tuesday, in its annual report on the state of human rights in the world, Amnesty International accused the IDF of actions constituting crimes against humanity and war crimes. The report also cited human rights violations in the PA.

Citing AP, Ha'aretz reported that on Tuesday, Lebanese President Emile Lahoud vowed to recover the disputed Sheba Farms area and said that the conflict with Israel would continue until there was peace in the Middle East.

Leading media reported that at the Hawara checkpoint near Nablus Tuesday, IDF soldiers arrested a 15-year-old Palestinian boy who was discovered carrying two pipe bombs. This is the second such arrest of a teenager at the roadblock in the past two days.

Leading media reported that the Synod of all the Orthodox Churches, which closed Tuesday in Istanbul, announced after two days of discussion that it is deposing Irineos I, the Greek Orthodox patriarch of Jerusalem. Irineos denied having signed a deal to sell prime East Jerusalem property to Jews.

Jerusalem Post reported that around 25 North American university professors who want to combat anti-Israel bias among academics will hold a conference at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, during the last weekend in October.

1. Mideast:

Summary:

Diplomatic correspondent Aluf Benn wrote in independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz: "A courageous leadership would prepare the public for the inevitable withdrawal [to the Green Line] ... instead of deluding the public with empty promises that will only cause more killing and sorrow."

Ultra-Orthodox Yated Ne'eman editorialized: "The U.S. knows perfectly that the terrorist groups are rearming and strengthening ahead of the inevitable next round of violence, but this won't spoil the party it will hold for [Mahmoud Abbas's] important visit."

Yuval Steinitz, Chairman of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "The demilitarization of Sinai is a strategic asset of Israel, and sane countries do not give up strategic assets in order to score dubious tactical achievements."

Block Quotes:

I. "What We'll Be Killed Over"

Diplomatic correspondent Aluf Benn wrote in independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (May 25): "The answer is so pat and self-understood that the question is no longer asked. 'The settlement blocs are vital to Israel, and Jerusalem will be united for eternity,' the state's leaders proclaim, and nobody even asks why anymore. What's so vital about [the West Bank settlements of] Ariel, Ma'aleh Adumim, Efrat and Kiryat Arba, that it's worth getting killed for them? That question is important to every Israeli because in the coming years the battle over annexation of the blocs and East Jerusalem will be at the center of the conflict with the Arabs. Israel will be threatened with boycotts and international isolation, and many will pay with their lives if the war with the Palestinians resumes. It is important, therefore, that every Israeli citizen demand explanations from the country's leaders and understand where they are headed before electing them.... There's no need to rush to the Green Line. One can and should demand a suitable security and political return from the Palestinians and the Syrians. But a courageous leadership would prepare the public for the inevitable withdrawal, come up with creative solutions for border amendments and territorial exchange and enlist international support for them, instead of deluding the public with empty promises that will only cause more killing and sorrow."

II. "Abu Mazen's Visit to Washington"

Ultra-Orthodox Yated Ne'eman editorialized (May 25): "The U.S. administration, which wished for Arafat's

disappearance from the political arena, is pinning all its hopes on Abu Mazen. The alternative is extremist Islam, which -- to day the least -- hasn't been overly popular in [the West] since 9/11. The fact that Abu Mazen hasn't respected any of the agreements he signed, and that he doesn't intend to disarm the terror groups, doesn't disturb Washington at this time. The Americans view the relative quiet in the region, which he achieved with the terror groups, an honorable 'entrance card' to the White House. True, the cease-fire is temporary and meant to help Ariel Sharon evacuate Jewish settlements in the Gaza region, but who is focusing on the future? The U.S. knows perfectly that the terrorist groups are rearming and strengthening ahead of the inevitable next round of violence, but this won't spoil the party it will hold for the important visit."

III. "Out of the South, Evil Shall Break Forth"

Yuval Steinitz, Chairman of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (May 25): "The likes of this have not been heard since the 12th century BC, when the inhabitants of Troy brought the famous wooden horse into their city and caused their destruction with their own hands. Could it be that little Israel will invite, of its own volition, the largest, strongest and most dangerous Arab army to deploy its troops in the demilitarized area on the border of the Negev, in immediate proximity to its major Air Force bases and other facilities? Israel's small size was the consideration that the late prime minister Begin had in mind when he insisted that in the peace agreement not a single Egyptian soldier be stationed near the Negev, only 'civilian police officers with personal firearms'.... The Egyptians are now trying to squeeze out of Israel a precedent-setting concession on the matter of demilitarizing Sinai. This is under the guise of a sudden willingness on their part to finally battle the arms smuggling from their territory.... In any case, professional agencies in Israel agree that the Egyptians have 'not excelled' in their battle against arms smuggling in recent years due to a lack of will; and conversely, if they wish to begin excelling at this task, they are already capable of acting against the smuggler networks in the depth of Sinai without making the 'effective treatment' contingent on changes in the demilitarized zone. The demilitarization of Sinai is a strategic asset of Israel, and sane countries do not give up strategic assets in order to score dubious tactical achievements. Is Jerusalem, like Troy, undergoing a tragic loss of strategic sanity?"

2. Newsweek Reports of Koran Desecration at Guantanamo:

Summary:

Columnist Attorney Rafik Jabarin wrote in left-leaning Arabic-language weekly Panorama: "Newsweek's apology is suspect, and was given under pressure."

Block Quotes:

"Suspicion Over Newsweek's Apology"

Columnist Attorney Rafik Jabarin wrote in left-leaning Arabic-language weekly Panorama (May 20): "Newsweek's apology is suspect, and was given under pressure.... What has been published about the investigators is true, since the abuse of prisoners in Abu Ghraib is normal.... Therefore, the mistreatment of the Koran is also to be expected from them, despite the Pentagon's statement two years ago requiring the investigators to respect the Koran. It seems like the American statement and the apology came only to calm the anger of the Muslims and nothing more."

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